



GHANA ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Promoting Excellence in Knowledge

BRIEF HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences was established by an Act of Parliament on the initiative of Ghana's first Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Following the signing of the instrument of incorporation of the Ghana Academy of Learning on 21 November 1959, the Ghana Academy of Learning was inaugurated on 27 November 1959, 2 years after independence from colonial rule. Fourteen of the Academy's 20 founding fellows were Ghanaians, 13 men and 1 woman. At the time of its establishment, the Ghana Academy of Learning was the first in postcolonial Africa.

At its founding, the goals, aims, and objectives of the Ghana Academy of Learning were to promote the study, extension, and dissemination of knowledge of the arts and sciences, to establish and maintain proper standards of endeavour in the fields of the arts and sciences in Ghana, and to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of the arts and sciences.

On its second anniversary, with the Ghana Academy of Learning (Amendment) Instrument of 1961, the name of the Academy was changed from the Ghana Academy of Learning to the Ghana Academy of Sciences.

On 1 January 1963, through Executive Instrument E. I. 5. Ghana Academy of Sciences Instrument of 1963, the National Research Council of Ghana (NRC) was merged with the Ghana Academy of Sciences, and the Academy was given an overall responsibility for the organization, coordination, and direction of scientific research for national development. The Academy prioritized national research needs, enlarged the capabilities of the NRC, and took over the administration and management of the research institutes, units, and projects of the National Research Council.

Following the 1966 change of government, in 1968 the Ghana Academy of Sciences was split into two organizations: the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The original aims and objectives of the Academy of Learning were retained and references to its responsibility for the organization and coordination of scientific research for national development were dropped. The aims and objectives of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences remain as originally defined in 1959 for the Ghana Academy of Learning:

- to promote the study, extension, and dissemination of knowledge of the arts and sciences;
- to establish and maintain proper standards of endeavour in all fields of the arts and sciences;
- to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of the arts and sciences in Ghana; and
- to do such other things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the foregoing objectives.

The mandate of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences is fulfilled through a program of activities, including the organization of lectures, symposia, public forums, workshops, and conferences throughout the year; as well as the awarding of prizes for academic excellence and in recognition of outstanding contributions to knowledge in the arts and sciences. The Academy's major activities include the Sectional Lectures in the Sciences and Humanities, Fellows' Inaugural Lectures, the Founder's Week Celebrations, and the Annual Memorial Lectures such as the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Lecture, the J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, and the Ephraim Amu Memorial Lecture.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

From its establishment with 20 foundation fellows the Academy has grown and now has a membership of 89 fellows. The council of the Academy is the governing body, and is made up of the principal officers of the Academy, namely the president, the two vice-presidents (arts section and science section), the honorary secretary, the honorary treasurer, the immediate past president, and five other fellows elected by the general meeting of fellows.

The president, who is the head of the Academy, is responsible for the general supervision of the affairs of the Academy and is assisted by the two vice-presidents. The honorary secretary supervises the secretariat in discharging its administrative functions, and the honorary treasurer is in charge of the Academy's finances.

The Academy is supported by a secretariat of 15 full-time administrative, secretarial, and clerical staff headed by an executive secretary.

Though the Academy's objectives have broadened over the years, it still maintains its core character of being composed of the highest level of intellectuals and professionals in the country. In addition to this, the Academy has endeavoured to constitute itself into a "think tank" that, as necessary, advises government and contributes to the policy formation process in the interest of national development.

MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND VALUES

Mission

The mission of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences is to encourage the creation, acquisition, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge for national development through the promotion of learning.

Objectives

The Academy's stated objectives over the years have expanded to contribute actively to the development of Ghana and Africa in general, by examining and addressing crucial issues of development.

Values

PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMITMENT

The Academy's determination to place the experience, knowledge, and energies of the finest minds in Ghana at the disposal of the nation is the hallmark of every undertaking.

EXCELLENCE

This is the essence of the Academy's existence—by selecting the most eminent intellectuals as fellows, the Academy establishes excellence as a prerequisite in every undertaking. It continues to inspire excellence in its membership and in the work of its secretariat to ensure that all its outputs are world-class.

INTEGRITY

In all things, the Academy strives to exercise honesty, objectivity, and independence of thought. Its contributions to Ghana's academic and intellectual wealth are motivated solely by the determination to serve the best interests of society.

RELEVANCE

The desire to be a useful and valued asset to its key stakeholders drives the Academy's efforts. By reflecting the needs and interests of Ghana, the Academy is a much sought-after resource.

UNIQUE COMPETENCIES

The Academy distinguishes itself from all similar entities in the country by strengthening and developing certain characteristics, capabilities, and competencies. The key assets of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences include:

- a national repository of high-level multidisciplinary knowledge,
- national access to the highest intellect and experts in diverse academic fields, and
- the credibility of the Academy and its fellows.

The Academy also has the ability to produce high-quality publications and the capacity to undertake targeted research.

PRIORITY AREAS

The Academy operates a busy program and it has a number of important activities that it wishes to undertake. Its current priority work is dictated by the availability of funds.

CURRENT PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

Fellows/Parliamentarians Pairing Program

Based on the scientist/parliamentarian pairing of the U.K.'s Royal Society, the Ghana Academy initiated a joint activity with members of Parliament (MPs). Fellows have been paired up with Ghanaian MPs to collaborate on matters of mutual interest and national concern. It is hoped that the program will focus attention on issues related to science policy and governance and also give fellows an insight into the constraints faced by MPs in parliament and in their constituencies in terms of science-related issues.

The Academy Solar Project for Rural Schools

This project is an initiative of the fellow/parliamentarian pairing program. Many schools in rural areas located more than 20 km from the national grid are unlikely to be connected for many years. The Academy project works to provide school children in constituencies of the paired MPs with some hours of lighting in the evening so that they can do their homework and study. Alongside this, there will be interaction with the community to introduce science and technology through issues such as sanitation for good health, soil conservation, and water catchment protection.

Science Education for the Blind

In collaboration with the Ghana Society for the Blind, the Academy is participating in the establishment of facilities for visually impaired students to enable them to pursue studies in science and mathematics.

ONGOING ACADEMY ACTIVITIES

Established Lectures

Annual sectional lectures in the sciences and humanities, fellows' inaugural lectures, the president's annual address, annual memorial lectures, public symposia, forums, and roundtable discussions.

Academy Awards: Gold, Silver, Bronze

Awards are given in recognition of outstanding contributions in the fields of arts and sciences. The bronze award is specifically geared toward youth.

Ministerial Visits Program

Through this activity, teams of fellows, led by the president, hold discussions with ministers to consider ways in which research by fellows can assist government policies and activities.

Founder's Week Celebration

This annual event commemorates the founder with a series of literary activities, including lectures and symposia that culminate in the Founder's Memorial Lecture.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS PENDING FUNDING

The useful programs that, with appropriate funding, the Academy would undertake include the provision of evidence-based advice to government, sponsorship of educational visits to centers of excellence, developing a headquarters for the Academy, and a science museum project.

The Provision of Evidence-Based Advice to Government

The Academy requires the support of funds for the engagement of the services of scientists through fixed-term contracts to carry out specific kinds of research leading to evidence-based advice for the government.

Sponsorship of Educational Visits to Centers of Excellence

The Academy would like to organize sponsored visits by fellows of the Academy and members of government, including senior decision and policy makers, to centers of excellence to promote an appreciation of the essential factors of collaboration between governments and international counterparts on issues of national development.

Headquarters Building for the Ghana Academy

With the expanding activities and involvement of the Academy in international programs, it is necessary that the current inadequate housing and facilities be upgraded. This would also cover other facilities such as offices, information and communication technologies, and library facilities, as well as development programs for staff of the secretariat. A program has been initiated, but it requires funding support.

The Science Museum Project

In pursuance of its responsibility for creating awareness in the fields of science and technology and developing a national culture of science, the Academy would like assistance to rehabilitate and prepare the National Science Museum to serve as a focal point for attracting public attention and broadening awareness of science. It will also serve as an additional science education forum for schools.

GAAS Special Publications

The Academy has the capability to prepare educational materials on a wide variety of subjects. With the extensive range of professional expertise of fellows and with adequate funds and resources, simple publications on subjects that otherwise remain little known and vague can be made available to the public.

Support for Original and Applied Research

The resumption of initiation and support for original and applied research of importance in national development (suspended because of a lack of funds) is highly desired.

PUBLICATIONS

The Academy responds to its aims and objectives partly through the abundant publications that it produces from its wide-ranging programs and activities. The publications are made available to the public to contribute to the extension and dissemination of knowledge of the arts and the sciences. The Academy's Proceedings, issued once a year, contains lectures and papers delivered during the Founder's Week celebrations and on important occasions in the course of the year. The J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, a series of three presentations, and the longest established, were originally part of the Academy's Proceedings, but have been published separately since 1974. Other documents published or scheduled for publication include the President's Annual Address, the Annual Sectional Lectures, Fellows' Inaugural Lectures, the Annual Memorial Lectures and Papers from the Academy's Public Forum, Symposia, and Roundtable Conferences organized in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. In addition to its own publications, the Academy used to offer general assistance to individuals and organizations for the publication of books considered to be academically worthy of support. The Academy also publishes a bi-annual newsletter.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GHANA ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (selection of themes)

Management, Administration, and Development (1971)
Food, Population, and Politics (1973)
Energy and Development (1976)
Science and Technology for Development (1978)
Human Rights and the Democratic Process (1980)
Health for the Community (1982)
The Future of Our Cities (1989)
The Culture of Dependency (1993)
Management of Ghana's Natural Resources (1995)
Financing Education in Ghana into the 21st Century (1996)
Land as a Resource for Development (1997)
The Notion of the State in Contemporary Africa (1998)
Critical Issues and the Challenges of the 21st Century (1999)
The Information Age (2000)
Some Critical Development Issues Facing Ghana (2001)
Globalization (2002)

ANNUAL SECTIONAL LECTURES (selection)

Sciences

Water: A Crisis in Development, Letitia E. Obeng (2003)
The Landscape Industry in Sustainable Environmental Management (2005)
Avian Influenza: Science Section and College of Physicians and Surgeons Symposium (2006)
Who Is a Sickle Cell Person?, S. K. Addae (2007)
Managing the Impact of Climate Change on Food Security: Some Post-Production Options for Ghana, S. Sefa-Dedeh (2008)

Arts

Language, the Mass Media, and Democracy in Ghana, Kwesi Yankah (2004)
Parliamentary Vetting and Our Constitutional Democracy, George Kingsley Acquah (2005)
Military Technology, the Nkrumah Government and Ghana Armed Forces, S. K. Addae (2007)
The African Family in Crisis: The Case of Ghana, G. K. Nukunya (2008)

FELLOWS' INAUGURAL LECTURES: 2004–2008 (selected themes)

Health, Medicine, and Society
The Future of Cardiothoracic Surgery in Ghana
Voyage from Birth to Death
Health Hazards for Ghanaians
Scholarly Authority and the Quest for a New World Academic Order
Impact of Cocoa Research Innovations on Poverty Alleviation in Ghana
Horticultural Research in Ghana: An Overview
Ghana's Animal Agriculture—The Way Forward
Religion and National Identity
Theology and Culture: An African Perspective
Assessing the Discussion from Cicero to Danquah
Private Investment and Law in a Developing Economy: Reflections
The Role of the Judiciary in the Establishment of Democracy in Ghana
Implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
Challenges of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Some Reflections
Improving Human Livelihood
Where There Is No Silence: Articulations of Resistance to Enslavement

ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURES

Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Lecture

The Genesis of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, A. A. Kwapong (2003)
Kwame Nkrumah and the Arts, J. H. Kwabena Nketia (2004)
Kwame Nkrumah and the Sciences, Letitia E. Obeng (2005)
Vision and Commitment in Leadership, Akilagpa Sawyerr (2006)
Ideology, Leadership, and Aspects of Kwame Nkrumah's Political and Social Agenda, T. Modibo Ocran (2007)

Ephraim Amu Memorial Lecture

Music, Cultures, and Development: The Legacy of Ephraim Amu, J. H. Kwabena Nketia (1998)
The Legacy of Ephraim Amu, Kofi Agawu (1999)
Ephraim Amu: A Portrait of Cultured Patriotism, Letitia E. Obeng (2000)
Music in Worship: Aid or Hindrance?, K. A. Dickson (2001)
Music and Moral Philosophy, R. F. Amonoo (2002)
The Poetry of Dr. Ephraim Amu, L. A. Boadi (2003)

Theological Landmarks in the Life and Thought of Ephraim Amu, Philip Laree (2005)

Bridging the Gap Between Tradition and Modernity: Amu as a Music Educator, A. A. Agordor (2006)

J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures (selection)

The Role of the Educated Persons in Ghana Society, R. K. A. Gardiner (1970)

Institutional Challenges of Our Time, Kwamena Bentsi-Enchill (1971)

The Commonwealth in Eclipse, Dennis Austin (1972)

Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford, the Man of Vision and Faith, L. H. Oforu-Appiah (1975)

African Unity—The Dream and the Reality, E. A. Boateng (1978)

Higher Education and Development in Africa Today, A. A. Kwapong (1979)

Environmental Management and the Responsibility of the Privileged, Letitia E. Obeng (1980)

Theology as Liberation: Four Contemporary Third World Programmes, C. G. Baeta (1983)

The Urban-Rural Contrast in Ghana: Its Implication for Development, K. B. Dickson (1984)

The Cultural Basis of Our National Development, K. Twum-Barima (1985)

Traditional Medicine in Ghana: Practice, Problems, and Prospects, E. Evans-Anfom (1986)

Ghana, A Nation in Crisis—Contemporary Perspective, William Ofori Atta (1988)

The Two Cultures Revisited: Interactions of Science and Culture, D. A. Akyeampong (1992)

Children's Literature—The Ghanaian Experience, J. O. de Graft Hanson (1993)

The Health Issues of Human Reproduction of Our Time, D. A. Ampofo (1993)

Linguistic Barriers to Communication in the Modern World, L. A. Boadi (1994)

An Anatomy of Modern Ghana, J. M. Assimeng (1995)

Flexibility and Responsiveness to the Economy of Ghana, J. H. Frimpong-Ansah (1996)

Veterinary Medicine in the Service of Mankind, E. N. W. Opong (1998)

Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity, K. Gyekye (1999)

Education in Ghana: A Tool for Social Mobility or Social Stratification, I. Addae-Mensah (2000)

Technology for Development, E. Lartey (2001)

Reflections on the Constitution, Law, and Development, Nana S. K. B. Asante (2002)

Training the Next Generation of Scientists, Marian E. Addy (2004)

Education, Literacy, and Governance: A Linguistic Inquiry into Ghana's Burgeoning Democracy, Kwesi Yankah (2006)

Ghana and the Promotion of Pan-Africanism and Regionalism, S. K. B. Asante (2007)

On Law and Liberty in Contemporary Ghana, S. K. Date-Bah (2008)

GAAS/FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG—PUBLIC FORUM, SYMPOSIA, AND ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCES (selected themes)

Making Democracy Work in the Fourth Republic (1993)

Problems and Prospects of Democratic Governance in Africa (1996)

Six Years of Constitutional Rule in Ghana (2000)

Corruption and Development in Africa (2002)

Reconciling the Nation (2005)

REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES

The Academy is officially represented on several national and international bodies. National bodies on which the Academy serves include the National Council for Tertiary Education, the Ghana National Commission on UNESCO, the Medical and Dental Council, the Science and Technology Research Endowment Fund (STREFund), and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

At the international level, the Academy is a member of the Third World Academy of Sciences, the International Academic Union, African Academy of Sciences, InterAcademy Panel, the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC), the International Council for Science (ICSU), and others. The Academy is also affiliated with the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, ICPHS-UNESCO, the humanities equivalent of ICSU.

Until 1 January 2003, the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences also hosted the West African subregional office of the Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (COST-ED), which was formed in the 1970s to advise ICSU on science in developing countries.

The Academy has links with other international academies and foundations in Europe and the USA including the Royal Society, the British Academy, UNESCO, the U.S. National Academies, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

ACADEMY LEADERSHIP

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Letitia E. Obeng

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Dean, Institute of Science and Technology for Africa, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Prof. Yaa Ntiamoah-Baidu

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